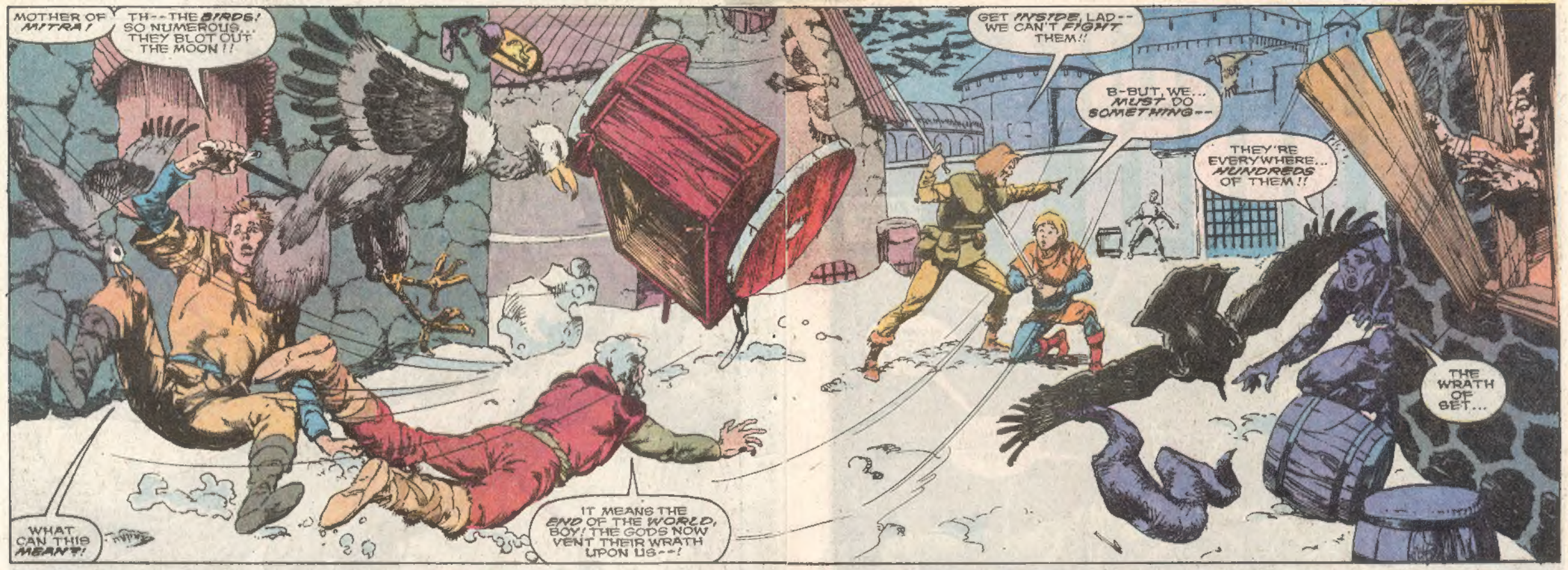
MARVEL
CONAN THE KING
$1.50 US
$2.00 CAN
54
SEPT
UK 50p
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE
AUTHORITY
KING CONAN IS GONE. LONG LIVE THE NEW KING -- THOTH AMON!
USKO

NIGHT IN TARANTIA, CROWN SEAT OF AQUILONIA.
THEY CAME FROM THE MOUNTAINS, FROM THE HILLS BEYOND THIS PEACEFUL LAND.
VULTURES.
AGENTS OF EVIL, SUMMONED BY THE SIREN CALL OF DEATH...

CONAN THE KING ™ Vol. 1, No. 54, September, 1989. (ISSN 0746-8237) Published by MARVEL COMICS, James E. Galton, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Group Vice President, Publishing. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. **SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, N.Y. AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES.** Published bi-monthly. Copyright © 1989 by Conan Properties, Inc. CONAN THE KING (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof), are trademarks of Conan Properties, Inc. All advertising and editorial material copyright © 1990 by Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Price $1.50 per copy in the U.S. and $2.00 in Canada. Subscription rate $16.00 for 12 issues. Canada and foreign, $20.00. Printed in the U.S.A. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. **POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO SUBSCRIPTION DEPARTMENT, 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, 9TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016.**


MOTHER OF MITRA!
TH--THE BIRDS! SO NUMEROUS, THEY BLOT OUT THE MOON!!
WHAT CAN THIS MEAN?
IT MEANS THE END OF THE WORLD, BOY! THE GODS NOW VENT THEIR WRATH UPON US--!
GET INSIDE, LAD-- WE CAN'T FIGHT THEM!!
B-BUT, WE... MUST DO SOMETHING--
THEY'RE EVERYWHERE... HUNDREDS OF THEM!!
THE WRATH OF SET...

HERE, GIRL!! COME DOWN HERE FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY!!

I KNOW NOT WHENCE THIS MISFORTUNE HAILS, BUT SURELY OUR KING SHALL PROTECT US...
OUR KING?! CONAN?!
OUR KING HARDLY KNOWS WE'RE ALIVE, OLD FATHER!

"BESIDES, THE CARRION EATERS, RACE TOWARD CONAN'S VERY GATES!"
LOOK OUT--!
THEY-- THEY'RE ALL FLOCKING TO THE CASTLE--

TO A RUINED WING OF THE CASTLE, TO BE EXACT.
TO THE FEET OF THEIR MASTER.

Stan Lee PRESENTS

NIGHT HUNT

THOTH AMON LIVES.

WHERE IS THE KING?

MINE ETERNAL ENEMY

WHERE IS CONAN?

JAMES OWSLEY - STORY
GEOF ISHERWOOD - ART
JANICE CHIANG - LETTERING
GEORGE ROUSSOS - COLORING
KELLY P. CORVESE - ASS'T. EDITOR
DON DALEY - EDITOR
TOM DeFALCO - EDITOR IN CHIEF

LET THERE BE *LIGHT.*

YOU, BOY, ARE THE SON OF CONAN. HIS CIMMERIAN BLOOD FLOWS THROUGH YOUR VEINS.

THAT ALONE IS SUFFICIENT REASON FOR ME TO KILL YOU.

I HAVE SWORN ETERNAL ENMITY UPON YOUR FATHER, HIS THRONE, AND HIS HOUSE.

I MAY AS WELL BEGIN MY REVENGE WITH *YOU, TAURUS.*

MITRA...

FOR MANY SEASONS HAVE I LABORED FOR THE FOOL *BARON MALORIC*, DISGUISED AS A HUMBLE STYGIAN WIZARD.

I ENDURED DEGRADATION AND SCURRILITY WHILE IN HIS EMPLOY. 'TWAS NECESSARY, AS I DESIRED TO REMAIN CLOSE TO CONAN'S THRONE--

--WHILE I WENT ABOUT THE TASK OF REGAINING MY SERPENT RING AND, WITH IT, MY *POWER.*

THIS FOOL HAD STOLEN MY RING.

HE, TOO, WAS, IN *DISGUISE*.

THIS WAS NO MERE STYGIAN PEASANT BOY--

--BUT A *DEMON* FROM THE *BLACK ABYSS*, WHO SOUGHT TO USURP MY RULE OVER THE SORCERERS' *BLACK CIRCLE*.

IT WOULD AMUSE ME TO HAVE THE SON OF MY MOST HATED ENEMY SERVE AS MY APPRENTICE.

JOIN MY CAUSE. SWEAR ALLEGIANCE TO ME.

THE DEMON HAS PAID FOR ITS IMPERTINENCE WITH ITS *LIFE*.

I HAVE OBSERVED YOU FOR MANY MONTHS, TAURUS. THERE IS A DEVIL'S SPARK WITHIN YOU.

YOU HAVE SCHEMED AGAINST YOUR FATHER ON MANY OCCASIONS.

PERHAPS I SHALL SPARE YOUR MISERABLE LIFE.

YOU HAVE *MISJUDGED* ME, THOTH.

AS MUCH AS I DETEST MY FATHER, I WOULD NEVER ALIGN MYSELF WITH ONE WHO HAS SWORN TO *KILL* HIM!

LIKE IT OR NOT, I AM STILL MY FATHER'S SON!

WE SHALL SEE...

MOMENTARILY...

BEWARE, LORD PRINCE! AGAIN I SAY--BEWARE!

WHA--? MY FATHER'S PRIZE BEAR--TALKING?!

'TIS NO BEAST, HIGHNESS, BUT I, BARON MALORIC, EVER YOUR HUMBLE AND WILLING SERVANT!

BETTER KNOWN AS THE IDIOT WHO GOT US ALL INTO THIS MESS!

WHERE IS MY MOTHER?

SAVE YOURSELF, PRINCE! AND SAVE ME WHILE YOU'RE AT IT! USE YOUR ELDRITCH POWER--

I DON'T HAVE ANY POWER, YOU IDIOT! ONLY A HANDFUL OF ZANDRA'S STUPID ILLUSIONS--

--WHILE THOTH AMON'S POWER RIVALS THAT OF THE ELDER GODS THEMSELVES!

I CAN'T SAVE YOU, BARON, AND I WOULDN'T, EVEN IF I COULD.

I ASK AGAIN--WHERE IS MY MOTHER?!

THAT I DO NOT KNOW--

YOU SHOULD HAVE SAID THAT TO BEGIN WITH!

I'VE GOT TO GET MOTHER AND RADEGUND TO SAFETY!

COME HERE, BOY.

WHA--?!

LYSANDER! YOU ARE MY MOTHER'S PERSONAL BODYGUARD! SURELY *YOU* MUST KNOW WHERE SHE AND MY SISTER ARE--!

THAT I DO, YOU LITTLE CRETIN. YOUR MOTHER HAS SENT ME TO FIND YOU.

WHY SHE'S SO CONCERNED IS BEYOND ME. AFTER ALL, *YOU* PLAYED THE MAJOR ROLE IN BRINGING THIS MISFORTUNE DOWN UPON US.

SOON, IN A COURTYARD ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CASTLE...

LYSANDER--YOU'VE *FOUND* HIM! THANK THE GODS!

AYE, QUEEN ZENOBIA, AND NOW WE'D BEST MAKE A HASTY EXIT FROM THESE GROUNDS 'ERE THE DEVIL FINDS US!

HE'S RIGHT, MOTHER-- THOTH AMON IS DEADLY-- UNSTOPPABLE--!

MOTHER-- WHAT ABOUT *KANG SAO*-- MY HALF-BROTHER?

WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO MAKE A SWEEP AND TRY TO LOCATE THE BOY--?

NAY, LYSANDER. I HAVE *MY* CHILDREN.

LET THE GODS GRANT MERCY TO *CONAN'S*.

THIS WAY! THE INVADER IS IN THE EAST WING--!!

NOT ANY LONGER.

--EH--?

YEEAARRGHH!!

YOUR LOYALTY IS *MISPLACED*, GENTLEMEN. CONAN NO LONGER RULES HERE.

I DO.

I... *THOTH AMON.*

I SHALL *NEVER* SERVE *YOU*, DEMON! WITH MY DYING BREATH SHALL I SERVE AQUILONIA'S MIGHTY MONARCH!!

PITY.

AAAI!IEEE!!!

YOUR KING HAS DEPARTED FOR A FOREIGN LAND. I WOULD LIKE DETAILS OF HIS MISSION--

--BUT I WILL SETTLE FOR KILLING EVERYONE HERE INSTEAD.

ARRRGGHH!!

THIS CHAMBER BEARS THE *ROYAL SEAL*. THEREFORE, IT MUST BE THE CHAMBER OF--

--*PRINCE CONN--?!*

AREN'T YOU *DEAD?*

MEANWHILE, IN AN IMPOVERISHED SECTION OF THE CAPITAL...

I'VE SENT SIX TEAMS OF SCOUTS, M'LADY, EACH TEAM HEADING AWAY IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION FROM A DIFFERENT PLACE. THOTH AMON CANNOT POSSIBLY STOP EVERY ONE OF THEM.

THE KING SHALL KNOW OF THIS INVASION IN SHORT ORDER, AND RETURN WITH PALLANTIDES AND THE ROYAL ARMY IF NECESSARY!

IN THE MEANTIME, I SUGGEST WE TAKE REFUGE IN THE HILLS BEYOND TARANTIA--

HEAR THAT, SISTER? WE'RE GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT! FATHER WILL COME QUICKLY--!

YES, HE *WILL*, WON'T HE, BROTHER?

FATHER WILL COME RACING INTO DEATH'S OPEN MAW, SUMMONED BY AN AGENT *YOU* HELPED CREATE!

FOR YEARS YOU'VE BEEN AN APPRENTICE IN THE DARK ARTS...YOU'VE LIED AND CHEATED AND SCHEMED AGAINST FATHER!

YOU MADE THE WAY FOR DEATH'S INCURSION ONTO FATHER'S LANDS, NOW YOU FEIGN CONCERN, WHEN IN TRUTH...

...YOU'D MUCH RATHER BE AT THAT DEVIL'S KNEE, LEARNING FROM YOUR MASTER. WHY NOT RETURN TO THE CASTLE, TAURUS? AFTER ALL...

...NOW IS YOUR BIG CHANCE!

*TAURUS IS ONLY A **DABBLER** IN THE BLACK ARTS. AT FIRST IT WAS AN AMUSING WAY TO ANNOY HIS FATHER.*

THEN IT WAS EVEN LESS THAN THAT.

TAURUS'S "EVIL PRINCE" FACADE HAS WORKED TOO WELL...

LOOK! THERE'S THE *ROYAL FAMILY*--COME TO *SAVE US!!*

SURELY THEY CAN ROUT THE EVIL THAT HAS COME UPON OUR LANDS--!

WAIT--LOOK THERE--DO YOU SEE--?

THE BOY-- HE HAS A GOAT'S FOOT!!

HE'S ONE OF THEM-- AN EVIL ONE! A CREATURE FROM THE DARK ABYSS!!

'TWAS ME AND MY KIND THAT BROUGHT THIS DOOM UPON US ALL!!

AWAY, DEMON!! LEAVE US!!

GO JOIN YOUR DARK MASTER!

YOU MEN PUSH THE VILLAGERS BACK!!

AYE, LYSANDER!

CITIZENS, STAND BACK! LET THE ROYAL FAMILY PASS!

AH NOW YOU USE OUR VERY OWN MILITIA ON US!!

YOU MEN SHOULD BE PROTECTING US FROM THE GREAT EVIL--NOT HELPING THAT GOAT LEGGED STRIPLING!!

THIS IS GETTING US NOWHERE! LYSANDER, MOVE THE TROOPS OUT!

YES LADY QUEEN!

AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO LEAD US--TO SAVE US?!

'TWAS ROYAL BLOOD THAT BROUGHT THE BLOODY VULTURES! THE EVIL!!

COME BACK AND FIGHT YOU ROYAL DOGS--!!

WHILE . .

SO CONAN S PRIZED PUP NOT SO DEAD AFTER ALL

YOU ARE HIS SPITTING IMAGE, BOY, HIS LIFE'S FLAME BURNS WITHIN YOUR VERY SOUL.

IT IS A FLAME I HAVE GROWN TO DESPISE

MANY SEASONS HAVE PASSED SINCE BARON MALORIC ENGINEERED YOUR PARTY'S AMBUSH IN THE WILDS OF GUNDERLAND.*

APPARENTLY THE ASSASSINS HE HIRED WERE MOST INCOMPETENT.

*SEE THE CLASSIC CTA #20.--DON

YOUR FATHER HAS LEFT THE CITY. YOUR GUARDS ARE ALL DEAD. THERE IS NO ONE TO SAVE YOU.

NOT THAT YOU WOULD RELY ON ANYONE. YOU ARE INDEED YOUR FATHER'S SON, CONN. YOU WILL DIE IN BATTLE YOUR HAND FILLED WITH--

--STILL--

SO, YOU PREFER THE CHASE

THEREFORE SHALL I SEND FORTH MY AGENTS

HE IS A PEASANT BOY OF [illegible] MEANS HE IS JOURNEYED TO TARANTIA TO MEET THE FATHER HE NEVER KNEW

HE SPEAKS NOT A WORD OF AQUILONIAN HE HAS NO IDEA WHO THE DARK STRANGER IS

EVEN SO, THE DEMON'S INTENT SEEMS CLEAR

IT IS ONLY A TWIST OF FATE THAT KANG SHO CLOSELY RESEMBLES THE LONG-LOST PRINCE.

THE HAND OF FATE IS A FICKLE ONE

HE HAS COMMITTED NO CRIME, AND YET. .

...HE HAS HAD PUNISHMENT METED OUT TO HIM FROM THE VERY DAY OF HIS ARRIVAL IN THIS STRANGE LAND

SOMETHING IS NOT QUITE RIGHT. HERE.

CONAN'S FIRSTBORN WAS FULL OF *FIRE* AND *BLOOD*

THIS BEHAVIOR IS VERY UNLIKE HIM

RAVEN, FIND THE BOY'S MOTHER

...AND HIS EVIL YOUNGER SIBLING, *TAURUS* WHOM I SWEAR SHALL THIS DAY SERVE ME.

SOON...

WHERE'D THIS DEVILISH STORM COME FROM?!

I SUSPECT THOTH AMON IS THE ROOT OF ALL OUR TROUBLES, LYSANDER.

MAYBE WE CAN RIDE IT OUT--

KEEP THE MEN MOVING!!

--CAN'T SEE A BLASTED THING, HIGHNESS--

BE CAREFUL NOT TO CRIPPLE THE MOUNTS--

MOTHER-- LOOK THERE-- UP AHEAD--!

IS THAT NOT THE SAME TOTEM WE PASSED SOME TIME AGO--

IT IS, PRINCESS! WE'VE BEEN RUNNING IN CIRCLES!!

MOTHER--WE CAN SEEK SHELTER AT THE *MANOR HOUSE* WE PASSED A QUARTER LEAGUE BACK--

I *KNOW* WHY YOU WANT TO GO TO *THAT* HOUSE RADEGUND-

THIS ISN'T THE TIME FOR PETTY ROMANTICIZING--EH? WHERE THE BLAZES IS *TAURUS?*

I DO NOT KNOW, MY QUEEN--THE BOY'S *WANDERED OFF!*

WELL, *FIND* HIM--AND *QUICKLY!*

FARTHER INTO THE WOODS...

IT'S MY FAULT. IT'S *ALL* MY FAULT.

I BEFRIENDED THE STYGIAN BOY WHO BROUGHT THOTH AMON'S SERPENT RING INTO THE COURT.

I INVITED THIS DOOM UPON US. NOW EVERYONE THINKS I'M JUST LIKE THOTH--

--THAT I TRULY *AM* EVIL--

--WHAT'S THIS--?

THE *SCOUTS* LYSANDER DISPATCHED TO FIND FATHER--*ALL DEAD!*

YOU TOO SHALL DIE, O PRINCE--

--UNLESS YOUR WILL BENDS TO MINE.

I HAVE SWORN THAT YOU SHALL SERVE ME THIS DAY, SON OF CONAN--

--AND YOU *SHALL!*

MEANWHILE...

THE MANOR HOUSE WILL PROVIDE SOME SHELTER FROM THIS BLASTED STORM, MY QUFEN!

YOUR DAUGHTER HAS THE EYES OF A HAWK.

RADEGUND ONLY HAS EYES FOR THE YOUNG BOY WHO LIVES HERE, LYSANDER.

AH YES, YOUNG LOVE IN BLOOM, EH?

NO--BOY, STAND FORTH!!

EMPTY. THAT'S ODD.

THERE'S A ROARING FLAME

--AND HIS FOOD IS STILL WARM! HE MUST BE NEARBY, MOTHER!

BESIDES, HE WOULDN'T HAVE LEFT WITHOUT THIS...

HE'LL BE BACK SOON

WE CAN CERTAINLY HOPE, PRINCESS...

WHILE DEEP IN THE FOREST...

THESE WOODS ARE *ENCHANTED*, YOUNG PRINCE. NO MAN MAY PASS THROUGH THEM EXCEPT BY MY WILL AND CONSENT. I DO NOT WISH TO CONFRONT YOUR FATHER JUST YET.

IT IS MY GREATEST DESIRE FOR HIM TO RETURN TO FIND HIS KINGDOM ENSLAVED...

...AND HIS SON AT MY FEET, OBEYING MY EVERY COMMAND.

YOU'LL HAVE TO FIND ANOTHER SON, THOTH.

I THINK NOT.

THE DAY YOU WERE BORN YOUR FATHER TOOK *CONN* HUNTING.

"IN THE SHORT YEARS YOU'VE TASTED LIFE'S BREATH, CONAN HAS BARELY SAID A DOZEN WORDS TO YOU.

"YOU ARE NOT THE FIRST BORN. YOU ARE NOT THE CROWN PRINCE.

"CONAN DESPISES YOU. HE'S ALWAYS DESPISED YOU.

"RENOUNCE HIM AND SERVE ME."

TOGETHER WE SHALL CRUSH THE LIFE FROM HIM

TOGETHER WE SHALL USHER IN A *NEW AGE!*

TOGETHER WE SHALL SEE HIM *PAY* FOR HIS CRIMES.

NO!

I'LL NEVER SERVE YOU.

I'LL NEVER BETRAY MY FAMILY.

OH, BUT YOU ALREADY *HAVE*, YOUNG PRINCE

LIAR!!

HE *HAS* NEGLECTED ME, IGNORED ME, PERHAPS EVEN *DESPISED* ME!

--BUT HE'S *STILL MY FATHER!*

THERE IS A BOND OF *BLOOD* BETWEEN US THAT EVEN *YOU* CANNOT SEVER, DEMON!

IS THAT *SO*, YOUNG PRINCE--?

I HEARD EVERY CURSE YOU EVER SPOKE EVERY THREAT YOU EVER MADE...

...EVERY VOW YOU'VE EVER TAKEN AGAINST YOUR FATHER'S THRONE

SSHWIFF!

EVEN BEFORE YOU KNEW YOUR *NAME* I KNEW WE WOULD FACE EACH OTHER THUS!

SSHLUNK!

THERE IS *GREAT DARKNESS* WITHIN YOU, BOY. IT IS THE VERY SAME DARKNESS THAT CONSUMES YOUR *FATHER'S* SOUL--!

YOU ARE FILLED WITH HIS DARK SIDE, JUST AS YOUR BROTHER, CONN, IS FILLED WITH CONAN'S ACCURSED *NOBILITY.*

CHKK

YOU DO NOT STRUGGLE WITH *ME*, BOY. YOU STRUGGLE WITH YOURSELF.

OH, I'M STRUGGLING WITH *YOU* ALL RIGHT, THOTH--

SHRUPP!

--AND, BY CROM, THAT STRUGGLE ENDS *NOW!!*

I.. SEE.

SO. I WAS MISTAKEN.

THERE *IS* A PART OF YOU THAT COMMUNES WITH THE LIGHT, AFTER ALL

SSSHHLUPP

YOU'VE CHOSEN TO FOLLOW THAT LIGHT.

THUS I SHALL HAVE TO EMPLOY *STRONGER* TACTICS.

...WITH *DIRE* CONSEQUENCES...

AND, AT THE MANOR HOUSE

I AM GREATLY DISTURBED, MY QUEEN. FIRST TAURUS DISAPPEARS, AND NOW WE ARRIVE HERE TO FIND *THIS BOY* GONE AS WELL!

MY SON HAS AN EVIL SPARK IN HIM, LYSANDER

I SUSPECT THIS ENTIRE CRISIS IS SOMEHOW HIS DOING. TAURUS'S DISAPPEARANCE DOESN'T YET FRIGHTEN ME

- AND I SUSPECT RADEGUND IS WORRYING OVER THE *OTHER* LAD ENOUGH FOR ALL OF US

THIS HOUSE BELONGS TO *COUNSELOR PUBLIUS*, WHOSE WHEREABOUTS ARE PRESENTLY UNKNOWN TO US

WE *THINK* PUBLIUS'S SON WAS LIVING HERE, BUT IN TRUTH--

--THIS FIRE COULD HAVE BEEN STARTED BY *ANYONE*.

WE MAY AS WELL JUST SIT TIGHT AND AWAIT CONAN'S RETURN.

THAT'S JUST IT, HIGHNESS.

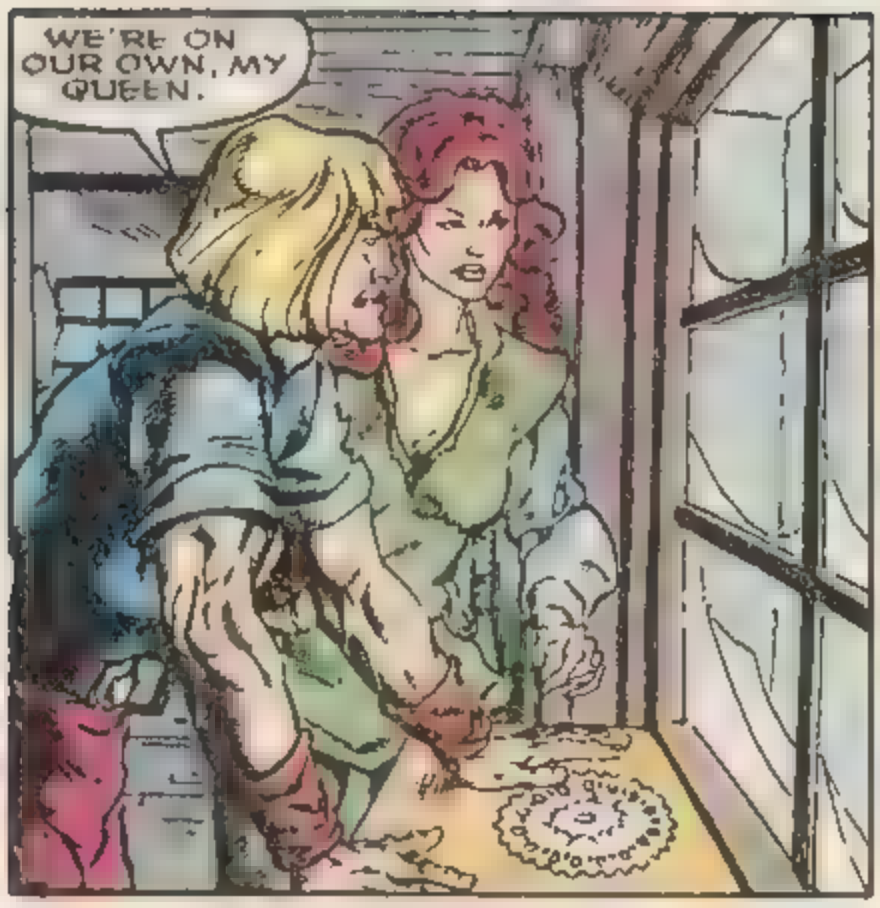
I DON'T THINK THE KING IS COMING BACK

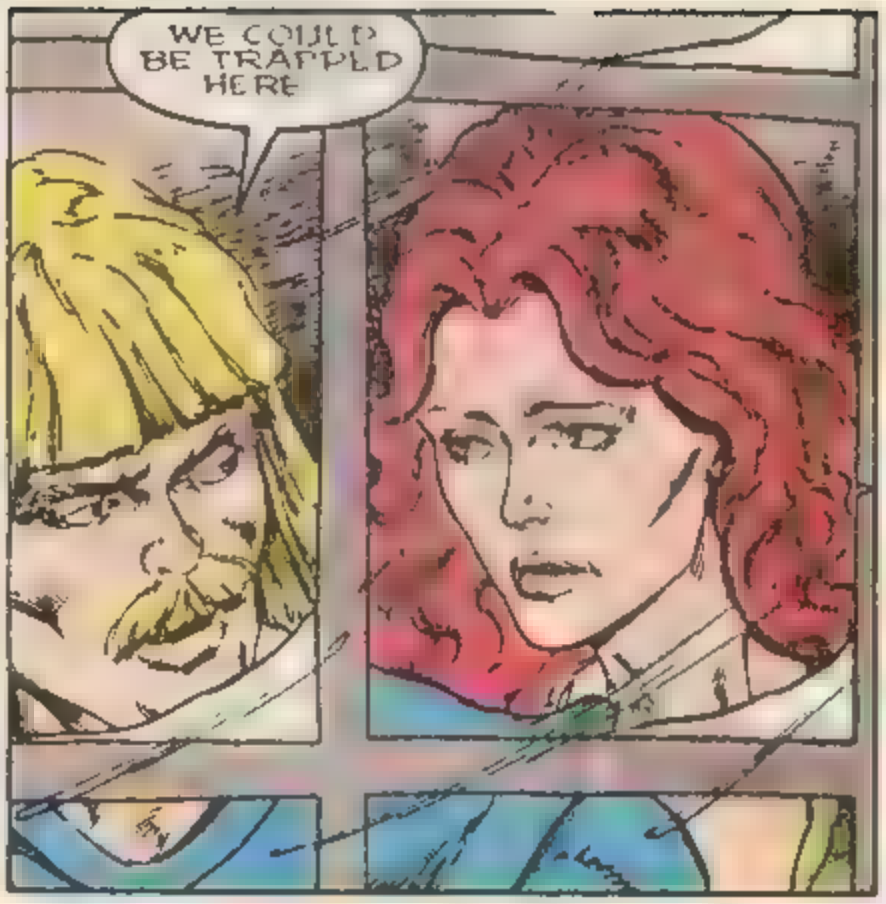
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

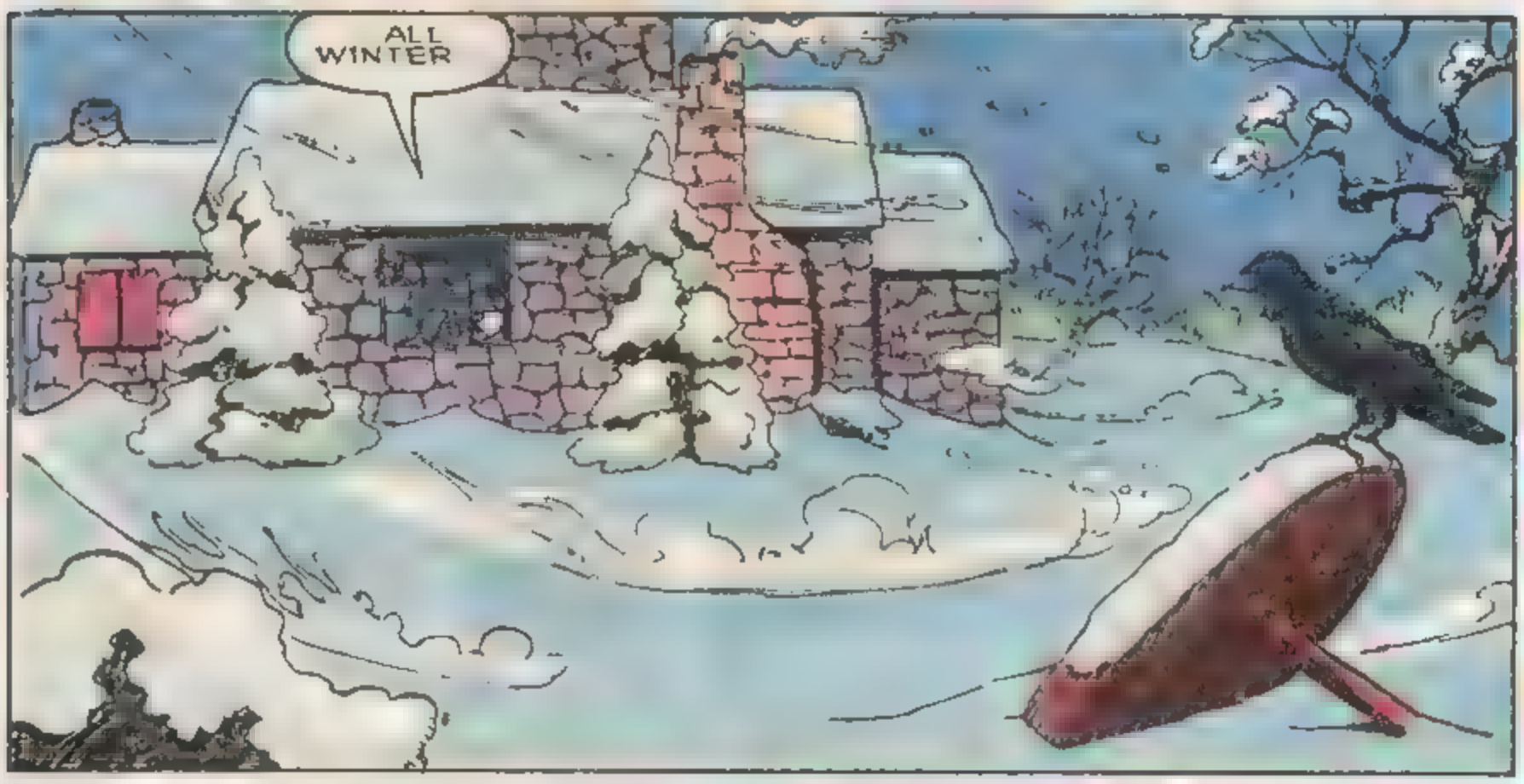
OUR PARTY WAS RUN IN *CIRCLES* IN THAT STORM.

I SUSPECT THAT BLIZZARD HAS *SORCEROUS* ORIGINS

I SUSPECT THAT ALL MY SCOUTS ARE *DEAD*


WE'RE ON OUR OWN, MY QUEEN.


WE COULD BE TRAPPED HERE


ALL WINTER

TWO PIERCING AVIAN EYES OBSERVE THE GOINGS ON WITHIN THE MANOR HOUSE...

AND HAVING SEEN ENOUGH, THE DARKSOME AGENT OF DEATH DARTS OFF INTO THE MAELSTROM

AND, IN THE WOODS. .

YOU INSIGNIFICANT, UNGRATEFUL LITTLE *WORM!!*

I GIVE YOU AN OPPORTUNITY MOST MEN WOULD GIVE THEIR VERY *SOULS* FOR... AND YOU *REFUSE ME?!*

YOU CHOOSE INSTEAD TO SIDE WITH A MAN WE BOTH DESPISE... TO AID HIM IN HIS STRUGGLE AGAINST MY HAND!

FOOLISH BOY. I HAVE NO FURTHER USE FOR YOU.

YOU WILL DIE AT MY HANDS!!!

GASP!!

HO--MY *RAVEN* RETURNS--

--WITH *MOST INTERESTING* NEWS.

I KNOW YOUR FAMILY'S WHEREABOUTS, YOUNG PRINCE.

COME, LET US GREET THEM TOGETHER!

THEN SHALL YOU AGREE TO SERVE ME--

--OR I SHALL *KILL* THEM *ALL!!!*

LATER. . .

STILL NO SIGN OF TAURUS...OR PUBLIUS'S SON...

FEAR NOT, MY QUEEN--

ZENOBIA. CALL ME THAT.

. . FEAR NOT, ZENOBIA.

I SHAN'T LET ANY HARM BEFALL YOU.

KRAKOOM!

BEHOLD, LOYALISTS TO CONAN'S CROWN...

...THE KING IS GONE.

BEHOLD YOUR NEW KING--

...--AND TAURUS, MY LOYAL DISCIPLE!!

THE SNOW-COVERED MEADOW BEYOND TARANTIA

DAWN

HE HAS BEEN RUNNING ALL NIGHT.

THOUGH HIS LEGS ACHE AND HIS HEART POUNDS, HE WILL NOT STOP.

HE IS ONE OF CONAN'S BLACK DRAGONS

HE IS TRAINED TO BE A FIERCE WARRIOR AND DEADLY ASSASSIN.

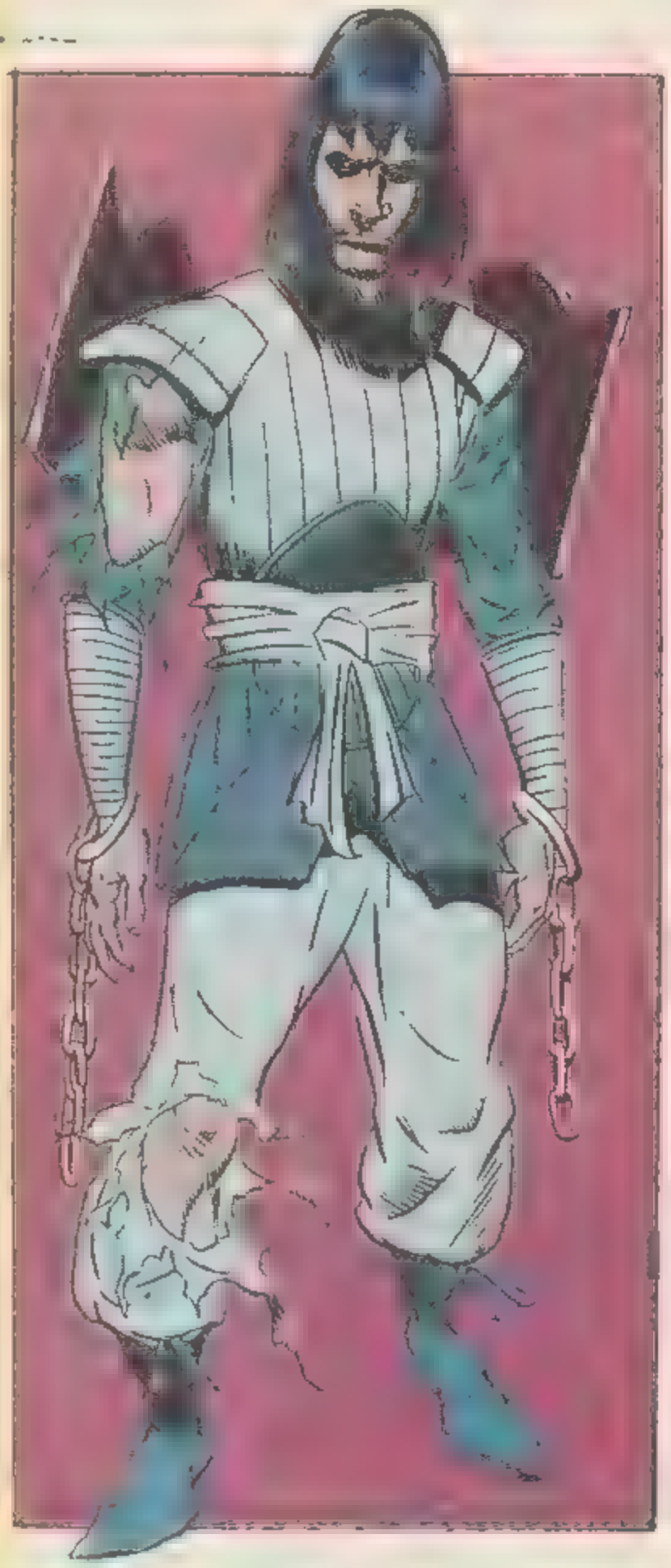
HE IS A TRAINED OBSERVER. HE BOLTED FROM HIS FATHER'S MANOR HOUSE THE MOMENT HE SUSPECTED ANY DANGER TO THE CROWN.

HIS NAME IS LEONIDAS.

HE WILL FIND THE KING OR DIE TRYING.

NEXT:
CONAN COMES HOME.
CONAN FINDS OUT.
CONAN GETS MAD.
DON'T DARE MISS...

NIGHT MARE!



Estranged from his father and his kingdom, Conan II, crown prince of Aquilonia, did ally himself with the fractious, tattered underground which sought to thwart the evil, conquering GENJIS.

But it came to pass that the young prince Conn was twice betrayed—by the leader of the rebels, Tsinje-Nushan, who remained loyal to one thing only —himself.

Attempting to ransom Conn to King Conan, Tsinge captures and chains the prince. But Conan's son is not to be held, and escapes into the dense forests of Khitai, his father in close pursuit . . .

Story—A.S. Blaustein
Pencils—Dale Eaglesham
Inks—Pat Redding
Colors—Steve Buccellato
Letters—Michael Heisler

THE DANK CHILL OF WINTER WRAPS ITSELF ABOUT THE BROODING GIANT LIKE THE TALONS OF SOME DARK NAMELESS DEMON.

THE BARBARIAN KING DOES NOT SHIVER. THE GRIM GREY EYES OF THIS HARDENED WARRIOR SCAN THE HORIZON OF THE DESOLATE TUNDRA.

HE HAS COME HERE, TO THE FAR REACHES OF KAITAI, TO FIND THE FUTURE OF HIS KINGDOM.

HE HAS COME FOR THE CROWN PRINCE OF AQUILONIA.

CONAN HAS COME TO FIND HIS ELDEST SON...

CONN.

ALONE... HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN?

HOW LONG HAS HE WORN SUCH A HEAVY CROWN?

THE POETS SAY THAT THE CROWN OF A KING WEIGHS HEAVIER THAN THE SHACKLES OF SERVITUDE.

MAYHAPS...

CONAN KNOWS HE MUST FIND HIS BOY. THE SEARCH CONTINUES...

...AND IS REWARDED WITH A SIGN--

A SMALL SCRAP OF CLOTH.

CONAN'S SEARCH IS NEARLY AT AN END SOON HE WILL FIND HIS SON. HE CAN FEEL IT.

BUT WHAT THEN?

THE BARBARIAN REFLECTS ON SIMPLER TIMES...

CONN!

EH?

SKITCH

HMMMMMMMMM.

OHHH, CONNNNNN!

WHERE ARE YOU, BOY?!

YOUR MOTHER'S WORRIED, LAD!

HMPH! NOW WHERE COULD MY SON HAVE GO--

HOWS ABOUT THIS?

YOU!

'TIS NOT FAIR!

BAP

CONN.

I GRUNT DEMAND THAT YOU GRUNT LET ME ATTEND UMMPH THE HARVEST FESTIVAL!

CONN.

I'M NO LONGER A LITTLE BOY I'M A--

HAH!

I KNOW, LAD YOU'RE A MAN.

A FIERY YOUNG MAN YOU ARE, BOY! MUCH LIKE MYSELF WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE!

VERY WELL! YOU SHALL GO TO THE FESTIVAL TONIGHT AND YOU SHALL RIDE ATOP MY OWN WARHORSE.

OH, FATHER--

HAIL PRINCE CONN

LONG LIVE KING CONAN!

OH, THANK YOU, FATHER--

--I'M SO HAPPY--

SSSOOO HHAAAPPYYY

THE PRINCE AWAKENS DREAMS OF SWEET YOUTH GIVE WAY TO COLD REALITY

HE IS TIRED... SO VERY TIRED.

FOR THE PAST YEAR HE HAS DONE NAUGHT BUT **RUN**. RUN FROM HIS RESPONSIBILITIES . RUN FROM HIS FATHER...RUN FROM **HIMSELF**.

THE CHAINS WHICH HANG HEAVILY FROM HIS WRISTS SERVE AS BITTER REMINDERS OF THE CHAINS WHICH **TRULY** BIND HIM.

CHAINS WHICH BIND HIM INEXTRICABLY TO A DARK MULKING FIGURE FROM HIS PAST. .

HIS FATHER...

...THE KING.

THE PRINCE'S MIND REELS... FACE TO FACE WITH HIS FATHER AT LAST HE FEELS ONLY NAKED TERROR.

LIKE A FRIGHTENED ANIMAL, HE RUNS--

--AND IS CHASED.

...THE ACCUSED.

HE KNOWS HE CANNOT RUN FOREVER THE HUNTED MUST FACE THE HUNTER

THE ACCUSER MUST FALL

HELLO FATHER

SINCE EARLY CHILDHOOD, THE YOUNG PRINCE CONN WAS SCHOOLED IN THE ARTS OF **CHIVALRY** HIS SENSE OF **HONOR**, FORGED LIKE STEEL WITHIN HIS SOUL, BECAME DEEPLY ETCHED WITH THE CODES OF **VIRTUE** AND **JUSTICE**.

SOME TWENTY SUMMERS AGO, HIS FATHER BETRAYED HIS MOTHER'S HONOR IN THE ARMS OF A COARSE PEASANT WOMAN

THE PRINCE'S OUTRAGE AT HIS FATHER IS FULLED WITH THE FURY OF HIS **CIMMERIAN** BLOOD.

HIS **BARBARIAN** HEART CRIES OUT FOR **VENGEANCE!**

KRESH!

HIS CHAINS OF BONDAGE HAVE BECOME HIS WEAPON

KRAKK!

CURSE YOU, FATHER!

AS A BOY, CONN'S ENTIRE WORLD WAS **AQUILONIA**, A WORLD RULED BY A FATHER, MORE **GOD** THAN MAN..

BEHOLD! A GOD BLEEDS!

CROM

MITRA

YOU *HURT* ME, BOY--I *LIKE* THAT.

YOU'RE JUST LIKE ME

NO!

CROM'S BONES--THE LAD'S NOT GOING TO MAKE THIS EASY

GOOD!

I LIKE YOUR *SPIRIT*, BOY! IF IT'S A *FIGHT* YOU WANT--

--GET READY FOR THE FIGHT OF YOUR *LIFE!*

IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE CONAN HAS FACED AN OPPONENT ***WORTHY*** *OF HIS METTLE* ***HE SMILES.***

SHEDDING THE TRAPPINGS OF HIS KINGSHIP, HE IS ***FREE.*** *THE JOY OF THE HUNT IS UPON HIM!*

SPRASH!

I HATE YOU!

KRAK

CHAK

HATE IS GOOD

BUT YOU *NEED* CONTROL.

...OOOOOOFF! WHERE WAS *YOUR* CONTROL--

KRAK

--WHEN YOU *STAINED* MY MOTHER'S HONOR--!

YOU'VE HURT ME *TWICE!* I'VE TAUGHT YOU WELL.

EH?

TOO WELL FATHER! *TODAY YOU DIE!*

YOUR TEMPER BURNS TOO *NOT*, LAD!

IT NEEDS *COOLING!*

YOU *STILL* DON'T UNDERSTAND, DO YOU?

YOU MUST *BE PUNISHED!*

ENOUGH!

NO WHELP OF MINE PREACHES TO ME!

I'M TAKING YOU TO KOBE.

THEN YOU WILL HAVE TO DRAG MY LIFELESS CORPSE BEHIND YOU, FATHER.

SON.

THE ENCAMPMENT OF GENJIS, LORD OF THE YAGYU CLAN.

--LET ME UNDERSTAND CORRECTLY. YOU HAVE JOURNEYED ACROSS A CONTINENT TO FIND YOUR SON, CONN--

--AND NOW YOU MEAN TO LET HIM GO?! HE HAS SERVED WITH THE REBELLION AGAINST ME. YOU KNOW I MUST KILL HIM.

AYE-- GENJIS.

WILL YOU STOP CALLING ME THAT! IT HAS BECOME MOST ANNOYING.

"VERY WELL, KOBE, MY OLD FRIEND--"

"I DO MEAN TO LET HIM GO."

"I JOURNEYED TO KHITAI IN SEARCH OF A BOY."

"INSTEAD I FOUND A MAN."

"I DO NOT KNOW WHAT WILL SHAPES HIS WAY."

"BUT A MAN'S DESTINY IS HIS OWN."

"KILL HIM IF YOU CAN-- GENJIS."

"FOR MY PART, I WILL HONOR OUR PACT."

TO BE CONTINUED...

Bullpen Bulletins

Quote of the Month

"Just in time! I couldn't have taken another panel of this unrequited love bull!"

—Rumiko
POWER PACHYDERMS #1

Stan's Soapbox

Hi, True Believers! The time hath come for a little soul-searching as we tackle a subject that concerns us all.

Years ago, some people looked down their noses at those who created or read comic books. Comics were thought of in the same light as we think of fast foods today. They were perceived as light entertainment with no real nourishment.

Even today, I'll occasionally hear someone give comics a bad rap, usually someone who hasn't read them in years. Well, in case you encounter the same type of comments, here's a little something you can run past your critic...

What are comics? They're stories, told in words and pictures. Are some not as well-written as others? Perhaps. There are also novels, plays and movies which aren't as well-written as others. But are some comic books written with great skill and integrity? Of course. Are some beautifully illustrated? Just take a look! Are they worthwhile? Bet on it! Since when has the written word coupled with illustration not been worthwhile?

Now, here's the clincher. Let's say Michaelangelo and Shakespeare are alive today and collaborate on a comic book. People would fight for a copy, right? Obviously, there's nothing wrong with telling a story using script and illustration. Just as with any other art form, everything depends on doing it well.

At Marvel, we try to do it well.

Excelsior!

Stan

ITEM: We Marvelites just can't sit still! Case in point: just last month in this space we told you about our brand-spanking-new Editorial Administration Pool members. Well, Mystical *Marie Javins* has gone and gotten promoted since then! Yup, the upwardly mobile Ms. J is now Marvelous *Margaret Clark*'s assistant editor! Congrats, Marie!

Filling the void is Delightful *Dawn Heermance*, who will serve as secretary to Magnanimous *Mark Gruenwald* and Adventurous *Archie Goodwin*. Welcome, Dawn!

ITEM: And speaking of mobility, things have been kind of crazy--okay, *especially* crazy--here at Mighty Marvel the past few weeks. We've been playing that madcap corporate game known as "Musical Offices"! Ready to play, kids?

Margaret Clark moved to *Carl Potts*'s office, who moved to *Archie Goodwin*'s office, who moved to *Sid Jacobson*'s office, who moved to *Don Perlin*'s office, found himself and his art-correcting Raiders way off in the southwest corner of the 10th floor, next to *John Romita Sr.*, who switched offices with *Bobbie Chase*! Whew!

If you think that sounds confusing, True Believer, you're right! In fact, if we had a nickel for every time someone went to the wrong office around here, we could probably afford to send out our comics for free!

ITEM: The Marvel family got a little bigger recently, as MOON KNIGHT penciler *Sal Velluto* and his wife *Sharon* welcomed their first child into this big, brassy world; *Alexander Mario Velluto* was born March 28. Congratulations to the new parents, and a hearty hello to Alexander, the lucky little devil! After all, how many kids can say, "My dad works for Marvel Comics"?

Pro File: Kelly P. Corvese

Assistant Editor on: CONAN THE BARBARIAN, CONAN THE KING, PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL, THE 'NAM, THE JOB, and TRANSFORMERS

Marvel freelance credits (past): Editing the SPEEDBALL letters page (collect them all!), typing numerous PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL scripts for *Carl Potts*.

Marvel freelance credits (present): Can I get back to you on this one?

My place of birth is: Providence, Rhode Island.

People who knew me in high school thought I was: My brother Jody.

My hobbies are: Working out (I bench press way more than bullpenner *Harry Candelario*), jogging, playing with Domino my cat, reading all kinds of novels, and drawing all the time.

My pet peeves are: People with maids (till I get one), compressed air cans when manned by *Dwight Coye*, all the extra furniture that *Don* packs in our office, and Lynda Evans's hair.

My favorite performers are: Tom Hanks, Glenn Close, Bette Midler, "Jane" the Monitor, Tracy Ullman, the entire cast of *Lost in Space*, my brother Perry as the entire cast of *Lost in Space*, and of course Lindsay Wagner.

The last good books I read were: *I Was a Teenage Couch Potato* by Steven Scott Wilson, and *Do-It-Yourself Home Repairs* by John Steinmetz.

The last good movie I saw was: In a crowded theater, with a butter-soaked floor, and some guy behind me passed out, I think he was diabetic.

If they were making a movie of my life, I'd like to see my part played by: Me! I've been studying the part for years.

My oddest habit is: *Days of Our Lives*, *General Hospital*, *Dynasty*...

My greatest accomplishment outside the comics field is: Graduating from the Swedish Institute and passing the New York state boards for a license in massage therapy.

The reason I got into comics was: Something about re-shaping the minds and ideas of our nation's youth to ensure future prosperity. (And I wanted to bump *Jim DiGiovanna's*™ Pro File off the Bullpen Bulletins page!)

The biggest influences on my work include: Klaus Janson, George Perez, Christopher Ivy, Tom DeFalco, Don Daley, and my dad.

The single work of which I am most proud is: My lovely wife Catherine and our two children, Anthony (2) and Elizabeth (1)...(Just seeing if you were paying attention.)

My greatest unfulfilled ambition in the comics field is: Going to be fulfilled.

The worst part of my job is: Always missing lunch with *Chris I.*, *Chris A.*, and *Mindy*.

When nobody's looking I like to: Talk in sign language, but no one seems to hear me.

The one thing I really want the world to know about me is: I've always believed you can have anything in life as long as you want it badly enough and work hard enough to get it.